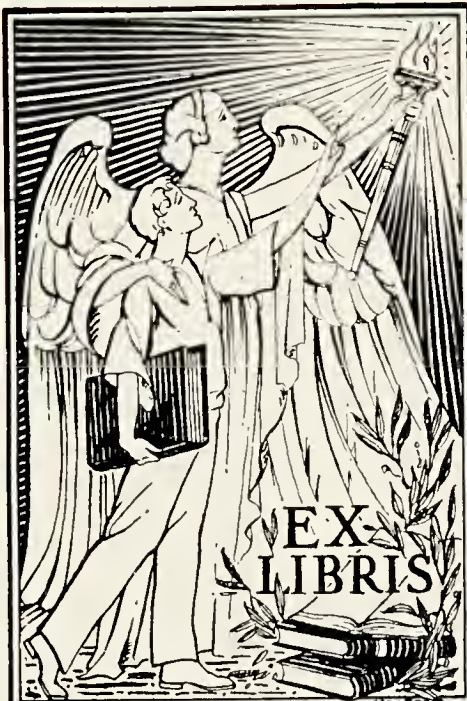


POSTWAR HUMAN RECONSTRUCTION

Philip S. Platt

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Postwar Human Reconstruction

Private Agencies Aiding the Blind Will Face New Standards and New Challenges When the War Ends

By PHILIP S. PLATT, Ph.D.

Executive Director, New York Association for the Blind

FROM THE VIEWPOINT of war year 1945, it seems clearly established that agencies for the blind are highly sensitized to, and apprehensive about, the postwar needs of the blind. They see the current period of exceptional war-time demand for the services of the civilian blind yielding before an eventual labor surplus, in which only the especially efficient blind worker will retain his job. They foresee competition of the blind, civilian worker with the handicapped veteran, crippled or blind. They fear the effect of discontinuance of the very large and urgent war orders in the workshops for the blind, which have supplied so large a share of brooms, mops, and pillow cases to the armed forces. They know their eventual tasks will be increased and that they must prepare to meet them.

On the other hand, the voluntary agencies, welcoming the extensive governmental program of training, rehabilitation, and job placement of war-blinded veterans, recognize that these intensive efforts, together with the generous pensions to the war-blinded, will create new standards and new challenges.

This is not the place to evaluate the organized forces, public and private, that are dedicated in our country to the interests of the blind. A brief summary of such agencies is necessary, however, to picture the extent of such efforts. The "Direc-

tory of Activities for the Blind" for 1943, issued by the American Foundation for the Blind, reports

varying degrees, but perhaps chiefly on the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation with its 50 state programs

THIS is the first of a series of four articles describing how agencies which deal with the handicapped are gearing themselves to meet postwar needs. The balance of the series, written by authorities in the field of the crippled, the hard of hearing and mental hygiene, will appear in subsequent issues.

62 residential schools for blind children, 39 libraries for the blind, 38 homes for adult blind, 5 homes and nurseries for blind children, 54 distributing agencies for government-owned talking book machines, 80 city, district and state-wide private agencies, 14 camps and vacation homes, 28 printing and publishing concerns, 8 professional training courses, 100 workshops for the blind, 46 official state agencies most of which will be carrying on a rehabilitation program for the civilian blind under the Barden-LaFollette Act of 1942, and the various federal agencies, particularly the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Social Security Administration of the Federal Security Agency. There were also 618 sight saving classes in 220 cities in 31 states.

The impact of the postwar years on these institutions will be felt in

and the Social Security Administration, on the official state agencies for the blind, and the workshops for the blind.

THE PARTICULAR concern of the voluntary agencies, engaged in training, rehabilitation, and placement, will be to clarify their relations with the official agencies, especially the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Here and there, it must be admitted, private agencies have regarded somewhat anxiously the services offered the blind by official agencies, wondering if they intend to usurp the entire field of service. Particularly, they fear the spectre of governmental control and dictation over their agency. Such agencies fail to understand the true functions of a voluntary agency. Leaders today regard the voluntary agency as one that is more and more ancillary to the official agency, stimulating, interpreting, supplementing, criticising, and detending it, but not competing with it or duplicating its services. The voluntary agency's functions are to pioneer and demonstrate new ideas, methods, and fields of activity, to raise standards of work, to concern itself with informing the public, to promote or oppose legislation, to do those things that the official agency cannot do by reason of its statutory or budget limitations, and in the best sense to be the citizen-guardian of the public agency. There will always be continued need for agencies with such conceptions of their purposes, even though many long-established services are found to be no longer necessary or are transferred to the official agency.

It will tax the ingenuity and adaptability of many agencies to adjust themselves successfully to the changing conditions which lie ahead. New occupations, hitherto considered closed to the blind, must be opened up and demonstrated. The use of

electronic devices may reveal the suitability of many new jobs for the blind. Special research in this field is needed and the American Foundation for the Blind has already begun to set up just such a laboratory.

The principle that industry has a social obligation to give suitable employment to the blind and handicapped, perhaps in proportion to their numbers in the working population—a principle adopted in England and in certain industrial concerns in this country—must be vigorously promoted.

THE NEW YORK Association for the Blind has appointed a Long-Time Planning Committee to consider the future of the organization as regards income and expenditures, developing trends in work for the blind and how they will affect its present activities, the possibility of new activities and the need of an additional building. It has also appointed a Committee on Organizational Methods which will study how the Association can function more efficiently. Probably, other organizations have done likewise. Such alertness to the necessity of anticipating future developments and preparing for them is a healthy sign that blind agencies will not be caught napping.

The private agency has above all a responsibility to provide in its personal services to its clients a quality of individualized understanding and resourcefulness that can only come from a combination of devotion and maximum freedom of action. When they do provide the extra interest and attention, as well as specialized services, which official agencies are seldom equipped or authorized to provide, they find their supplementary services eagerly sought. Many a war-blinded veteran will in time fall back on the voluntary agency for these values.

In order to have a "hase" from which to measure future changes, the Lighthouse has just completed a census of its 3,893 blind on its register during 1943. This revealed, among much valuable information, that 967, or 25 percent, were employed as against 1,227, or 32 percent, that were receiving Public Assistance. However, when the age group 21-60 is considered, the percentage employed becomes 42—an extraordinarily high figure, even in war-time when both male and female are included.

The type of employment is listed below. How many of these 967 breadwinners will lose their jobs to sighted or blinded war-veterans in post-war years?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Sheltered Shops | 192 |
| Newsdealers | 191 |
| Factory Workers | 184 |
| Dictating Machine Operators | 32 |
| Teachers | 30 |
| Salesmen | 29 |
| Own Business | 26 |

(Continued on page 14)



The old conception of the blind person as one who is totally handicapped has given way as sightless workers prove their value

SILVER THREADS appeared among the gold as BETTER TIMES this month passed its twenty-fifth milestone, but the publication which first presented itself a quarter century ago as "the smallest newspaper in the world" is still young and growing. Maturing with the profession which it serves, New York's welfare news weekly continues to perform the dual functions of mirror and crystal ball for social and health agencies of the city.

Founded in 1919 by George J. Hecht, then chairman of the publicity committee of United Neighborhood Houses of New York, BETTER TIMES first appeared on the horizon, literally "no larger than a man's hand," in January, 1920. Carrying the brash emblem EXTRA in one corner, the first issue featured an exclusive interview with Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt on the value of neighborhood houses in Americanization.

The 8-page publication, 4 inches wide by 5 high, started with all but one of the ingredients of a successful newspaper—news, an editorial, sports, illustrations, a comic strip, letters to the editor and even a humor column. Advertisements were to come soon. The introductory editorial, describing the objective of the new publication, sounded a theme which is startling in its timeliness today.

"Through the war," the editors wrote, "everyone, everywhere, has been imbued with the spirit of service. During the period of belligerency no sacrifice was too great for the American people. This devotion to our democracy must not be permitted to diminish. The spirit that won the war must be kept alive.

"With this general aim in view, BETTER TIMES is published. It will be devoted primarily to increasing the interest of New Yorkers in community work, in the faith that through neighborhood organization many difficult social reconstruction problems will be solved."

The staff of the pint-sized bulletin included Mr. Hecht as editor; David S. Hanchett, Arthur P. Kellogg and Kenneth D. Widdemer as associate editors, and Gordon Grant as art editor. During the first year, Harold Riegelman and Gertrude Springer were added as associate editors, and subsequently Mrs. Springer became managing editor.

The value of BETTER TIMES as a training ground is shown by the careers of its staff members after leaving the publication. Mr. Hecht resigned to establish *Children, the Parents' Magazine*, and is now publisher of *Parents, Calling All Girls, True Comics, True Aviation Picture-Stories, Baby Care Manual, So You're Going to Have a Baby, Mother's Manual, Baby Care Digest* and *School Management*. Mrs. Springer later joined the editorial board of *Survey*, and other editors, who came later, have likewise gone on to further distinguished service in journalism. Mr. Widdemer is now

director of Neighborhood Health Development, Inc.

Varied as the first issue was, the second offered still more features. The first book review appeared, written by Mrs. Mary K. Simkhovitch. The pictorial feature, "Settlement Scenes," which had started in the first issue as a series of sketches of the Henry Street Settlement, blossomed by February into a full-fledged photographic display, this time of Riis Neighborhood House. Most important, the editorial power of the fledgling newspaper was thrown behind the movement for socially useful war memorials, in the form of neighborhood houses. The hotly argued issue of today—mounds of bronze and stone *versus* memorials of genuine intrinsic value—was settled twenty-five years ago by BETTER TIMES in a manner then satisfactory to truly public-spirited citizens.

By March, BETTER TIMES had outgrown its tiny format and had stretched to sixteen 5-by-7 pages. Its "smallest newspaper" tagline no longer being appropriate, it adopted a new title: "A Little Paper with a Big Purpose." Commercial advertisements appeared, the subscription price rose to a dollar a year, and circulation bounded to the astonishing figure of nine thousand. BETTER TIMES was on the way to success.

BECAUSE it so obviously filled a need in New York's social work world, the paper soon outgrew its origins, though it never lost interest in the settlements. With the October, 1920, issue, it began publication under the aegis of an independent corporation, Better Times, Inc.—"not for private profit, but for public service." The editors announced that thenceforth the publication would be devoted to all phases of charitable and social service work in New York City. The "Board of Advisors and Sponsors" proclaimed in the masthead included the names of Herbert Hoover, chairman; Dr. Felix Adler, George Gordon Battle, Commissioner Bird S. Coler, Sam A. Lewisohn, Rev. Bryan J. McEntegart, Mrs. V. G. Simkhovitch and Miss Lillian D. Wald.

"Thus," said the leading editorial in October, "BETTER TIMES will serve charitable and social service work in New York City as a trade paper serves business. Furthermore,

our publication will be a medium for the discussion of community problems, calling attention to social conditions which need improvement, and offering constructive criticism of the organizations wrestling with these conditions. In short to help make New York a better place to live in, is the supreme aim of BETTER TIMES."

Analyzing the local scene in terms of this aim, the paper quickly found something it could do. The December, 1920, issue blazoned a front-page headline: *New York Needs a Council of Social Agencies*. Creation of such a council was still five years in the



Founder and first editor of Better Times, George J. Hecht is now publisher of *Parents' Magazine* and also secretary of the Welfare Council

future, but the headline foreshadowed coming events. In 1925, as an outgrowth of a contest sponsored by BETTER TIMES, the social and health agencies of the largest city in the country were to join hands, to form the Welfare Council of New York City.

Meanwhile, as a news-hungry public clamored for more, BETTER TIMES branched out. By 1922, the pattern of the monthly publication had become set. It functioned largely as a magazine, containing signed articles, interviews and such features as "The Year's Social Work Summarized" and "The Administration of Social Agencies." To meet the demand for spot news, the editors undertook publication of a supplement, issued every

Monday under the title *The Weekly Better Times Bulletin*. Although the heading and advertisements were printed in advance, the news—which consisted of one-paragraph items plus a welfare calendar—was mimeographed. The weekly sold for four dollars a year, while the monthly was available on separate subscription at two dollars. Within a few weeks, the mimeographing yielded to authentic printing, but the news treatment remained the same. The calendar, which quickly proved a popular feature, has been continued to the present, and the treatment of news briefs has been revived in the current "Weekly Roundup."

EARLY in 1923, BETTER TIMES extended its service to the entire country by inaugurating the Better Times Syndicate. Articles, cartoons and poems were furnished monthly for simultaneous publication in Chamber of Commerce periodicals and out-of-town newspapers. Drawings by Hendrik Willem Van Loon were supplied, as well as articles by Judge Elbert Gary, chairman of the board of the U. S. Steel Corporation, and other national figures. It was at about this time that Mr. Hecht restated his publication's creed:

"BETTER TIMES is not a commercial enterprise, but is itself a social agency."

That BETTER TIMES was already a force in the community is established by a brief item in the January, 1922, magazine. The previous issue had contained an article about a recreation pier which, "instead of providing during the summer months a cool breathing spot for the residents of one of the most crowded tenement districts of the city, has been used as a storehouse for street cleaning apparatus."

So startling was this discovery that the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald* and the *Globe* quoted the article in their columns, and the *Evening Mail* offered editorial comment on the subject. A representative of the Gramercy Boys' Club volunteered to organize a committee from the social agencies of the district to urge action; and Mayor Hylan, Health Commissioner Copeland and the Dock Department "all assured BETTER TIMES of their sincere desire to bring the pier back to the use of the people."

Teen-Age Canteens

(Continued from page 3)

lessness which extended from the furniture to the social observances. The chairs, tables, and few games all needed work with hammer and nails. When the worker was asked if the young people had a share in the planning or did any of the work at present he said no, and added that they were extremely destructive. It was a temptation to ask if he had ever tried to "fix up the place," asking for the boys' help, but the evidence indicated that the idea would have been too amazing even to consider. Certainly the room itself demanded nothing in the way of consideration from the group and it was not surprising that the boys were dancing with their hats on, that the equipment was abused, and that noise and confusion seemed to be the distinguishing characteristics. One wondered how anyone could provide such a place and believe that it would serve a good purpose for the boys and girls using it. It was not to be wondered at that the furnishings were broken, for in that state they matched the general atmosphere. Food and soft drinks were served here only occasionally, because "no one asked for them very often." To set and keep a standard which the group might respect seemed impossible to a worker who proceeded from the premise that the canteen was a place where the problem boys and girls congregated. There was an evident feeling that there was not much that could be done, and keeping out the worst of the boys prevented serious trouble from arising.

Some other centers use several activities in such a way that they serve the purpose of a canteen. Dances are given for soldiers, new emphasis is placed on the Social Room or Lounge, game rooms have been refurnished. Ingenuity has been used to find ways to catch and hold the interest of young people who, like numberless adults, must keep moving—not in any particular direction, but because they cannot sit still or in any one place for any length of time.

EVERYWHERE the boys and girls are talking of the boredom of school. Boys who would have gone to city colleges a few years ago have left high school before graduation and have gone to work. In one canteen, where the director has established an excellent relationship with the young people, the questions of schooling, preparation for jobs, marriage, the meaning of the war, are discussed over a "coke" and a cigarette. The same boys and girls would never join a discussion group, but here, in the informality of the canteen, the questions seemed to arise by chance and the talk was

real and honest. Here the lights are pleasant, there is a place to leave your hat and coat, there are chairs and tables where you may sit and talk with your friends and there is a small floor for dancing. Little by little new ideas are being developed, but always they seem to be the fruit of casual talk, a special dance, a bond rally with good entertainment, going-away parties for the boys leaving for Army or Navy training. One so-called cultural program was tried, but the audience grew restive and several left.

Several leaders spoke of their desire to interest the canteen members in something beyond the dancing, the refreshment bar and inconsequential conversation. This is probably a good sign that the desire to "improve" is neither sleeping nor moribund but it is possible that there is a place for this seemingly unimportant variety of activity. The court records of the youth who are the delinquents and trouble-makers show that nearly all of them come from broken homes or homes where one or both parents have failed completely as persons and parents. Only rarely does a boy or girl seem to have had any connection with a recreation agency, a settlement, or community center. Is this because we have planned our programs for the more ambitious, eager and talented young people in our neighborhoods? If the canteens draw so many young people who have never been attracted to a more formal program perhaps we should consider seriously if there is not a place for something that will compete with the corner, the candy store and the cheap restaurant. Much of the social life in the poorer sections of New York is centered around these three places. We admit that we have a responsibility for the boys and girls who haunt them, but we do not seem to have used either the ingenuity or the hard work necessary to produce real competition with them.

The canteen can provide a pleasant, informal atmosphere where boys and girls can meet and laugh and talk, drink cokes, dance a little, sing with the records or around a piano. Perhaps the very fact that they are doing these things in wholesome surroundings should justify such a place. Add first-class leadership in the belief that quite wonderful things can happen to a boy or girl who shares a friendship with a person of character and attainments, and something good is bound to come of it. The world is full of people who want very simple things. The girls want to get married and have a home and children. The boys want a job and a girl and good times. They have no striking ambi-

tions and will always take things as they come. They fill our movie houses and can survive almost anything in them, including the worst of double features. They will make no plans for the post-war world or do anything with the pure hope of making the world a better place, but they have their place in the world to fill and although their aims may not seem high they too have aspirations. Will we make a place for them in our programs?

Postwar Human Reconstruction

(Continued from page 7)

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Porters | 24 |
| Musicians | 22 |
| Professionals | 16 |
| Office Work | 15 |
| Piano Tuners | 12 |
| Masseurs | 12 |
| Messengers | 12 |
| Miscellaneous | 165 |

Among the 21-60 age group who were not employed (58 percent) were 446 housewives, 393 attending Lighthouse training and occupational classes or receiving home instruction, 218 homebound with physical or mental disabilities or not desiring employment, 109 in institutions and 62 possibly employable but difficult to place.

SUCH A picture helps to visualize the nature of the blind clientele of a large metropolitan agency. Will the case load remain the same or increase? Will the proportion of the aged blind be greater five or ten years hence? Will the number of war-blinded be sufficiently great to modify greatly the character of any single agency's activities? These are questions every agency is thinking about.

The total number of war-blinded is as yet an unknown figure. At the moment, it is something over 300, of whom many are not yet discharged. Few of these have come to the private agencies. Those who have come receive a warm welcome and no stone is left unturned to find a satisfactory solution of their difficult problems. The early period of adjustment for the newly-blinded is the most difficult of all times and many are not ready emotionally or otherwise to make important decisions. The private agency is eager to assist understandingly and tactfully in this readjustment.

Never before has there been such awareness of the problems of the blind or a greater determination to meet them intelligently and resourcefully. The war has only heightened this awareness and put every agency on the alert to cope with them successfully.

Security for the Social Worker

(Continued from page 6)

In addition, the employer, in cooperation with other member agencies, will contribute an amount equal to 2 percent of the earnings of all participating employees to provide annuities for employees who have credited service rendered prior to the effective date of the plan, referred to as "Past Service." Contributions for past service will begin as of the effective date of the plan regardless of the entrance date of the employer, and will continue to be made for a period of years to be determined by the board of trustees.

Acceptance in writing of the terms of the constitution and by-laws of the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association, Inc., will constitute the contract by which non-profit organizations may become contributing members. Under the constitution and by-laws each contributing member organization is entitled to vote at the annual meeting of the association. It is hoped that in all of the larger communities the community chest will agree to serve as the transmitting organization for the contributions of the member organizations and their employees, in that community. However, if no such transmitting organization is available, a contributing member organization may make its payments direct to the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association, Inc.

ENROLLMENT in the plan for workers now employed is voluntary. However the by-laws require that for an organization to become a contributing member 75 percent of its eligible employees must enroll. Thereafter enrollment will be a condition of employment for all workers under sixty-five years of age, the new worker being eligible to participate after he has been employed one year. An enrollment fee of \$1 for each new worker is to be paid, half by the employer and half by the employee.

The office of the Association is at 441 Lexington Avenue, Room 1407, New York 17, N. Y. Printed booklets and forms for enrollment of employees should be available soon. Under the by-laws five thousand workers must enroll in order to make the National Retirement Plan effective. A number of community chests have already indicated their intentions of including in their budgets the funds required by their member agencies to participate in the plan.

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25 Years of 'Better Times'

(Continued from page 9)

baskets descend on them, and a few minutes later the barrels are empty."

THEN CAME the upturn. It became possible to debate whether the schools should continue to serve free lunches to children. "Boon-doggling" became an issue, and BETTER TIMES defended the public work projects by illustrating some of the permanently useful results.

The depression left its permanent marks, however, on the Welfare Council and BETTER TIMES as well as on the nation. Mr. Hodson resigned to become Mayor LaGuardia's Commissioner of Welfare. Through the pages of BETTER TIMES, more than a score of the city's welfare leaders paid tribute to Mr. Hodson, wished him well in his new post, and pledged full cooperation. "The Welfare Council's Loss Is New York City's Gain," said BETTER TIMES.

Six months later, in June, 1934, BETTER TIMES introduced the new executive director of the Welfare Council, Robert P. Lane, as "a typical American—keen, genial, humorous, socially and intellectually at home in whatever environment he finds himself."

Under the direction of the new helmsman, the Welfare Council sailed ahead once more through choppy seas. Then, a year and half later, the Council and BETTER TIMES suffered another loss with the resignation of Mr. Resnick, who left to become first informational director of the Social Security Board in Washington. He was succeeded by Isidore Sobeloff, with Dorothy M. Nathan as assistant editor. In October, 1936, Reid Byron assumed the post of acting editor, carrying on until the beginning of 1938, when Hiram Motherwell became editor.

In a new statement of purpose in December, 1938, the editor wrote:

"BETTER TIMES hopes it will never be dull. It intends never to be inaccurate or unfair. It promises to be . . . independent in judgment and appraisal. It recognizes that welfare work is today overwhelmingly governmental, but that although the voluntary agency has a quantitatively minor task to perform, that task is qualitatively indispensable. It will bespeak the support of New York's citizens for the brilliant leadership and loyal labor of its multitude of public servants, but will endeavor to hold fast to the high standards by which public welfare work should be judged. In short, it will survey and appraise, but above all report, the struggle of the greatest city of the New World to improve itself and protect itself against poverty, disease and crime."

One innovation was the guest editorial, written on a variety of topics by such professional and lay leaders as Mr. Lane, Leonard W.

Mayo, Walter S. Gifford, Natalie W. Linderholm, James G. Blaine and Stanley M. Isaacs. Mr. Isaacs, writing in December, 1939, on "Character Training in Wartime," referred in passing to the German Fuehrer as "some mad dictator across the seas." One reader of BETTER TIMES protested.

BUT IT WAS too late. Already the words "war-torn Europe" had appeared on page 1 of BETTER TIMES. Soon the effects of war were to be felt in New York City's welfare world, with changes in staff, mounting defense preparations and the attendant rise in employment.

On December 12, 1941, in a front-page message to the Welfare Council's constituency, Mr. Lane wrote:

"Our country is at war, and the solemn duty of every American man and woman is to do whatever he can to bring that war to a victorious conclusion.

"The voluntary welfare and health agencies in New York City are in a position to render vital good on the home front. They will accept—they already have accepted—responsibility as truly as the soldier in the field. They fight with different weapons, helping to maintain the health, welfare and morale of the civil population, but they are part of the same war effort."

Life and work went on, despite the war. Mr. Motherwell had resigned in March, 1941, and Grace Livingston Blanch, business manager and assistant to several editors, conducted the paper single-handed for a time.

The first issue of the publication year 1942-43 reported the death of Mr. Schoellkopf, and for a year the Welfare Council was without a president. Then the first issue of the publication year 1943-44 reported the election of Col. Allan M. Pope to the office, and since that issue BETTER TIMES has had ample Council news to report. Reorganization of the Council, development of new projects and ambitious plans, staff changes and additions—these have at times taxed the capacity of the paper's columns. Now the road is clearing, and BETTER TIMES can do an increasingly creative job of welfare reporting.

Editorial direction of the publication has, since September, 1943, been in the sure and expert hands of Miss F. R. Adlerstein, former editor of the *American Hebrew* and now director of public relations for the Council. Under her guidance, the publication has once more attracted the contributions of prominent welfare and civic leaders. Modernization of format and expansion to the present size last fall were but outward signs of the trend toward achieving the editor's aim of making BETTER TIMES "better and timelier."

Week by week, meanwhile, BETTER TIMES continues to report and to stimulate activity in response to the changing times. The publication looks to completion of a cycle, with the second postwar era. Already feature articles have discussed readjustment of veterans and war workers, peacetime use of volunteers, advances in welfare and health in the years to come. The health issue of last November—itsself a milepost in health education—traced progress of the past three decades and outlined the challenges ahead.

Without stopping for breath, BETTER TIMES has completed one quarter-century crammed with activity, and launched into a second, which promises an equally hectic pace. Perhaps at the 100-year mark the editors will have time for a pause, a sigh and a nostalgic: "Those were the days."

CALENDAR

Monday, February 5

Youth Consultation Service of the Diocese of New York, annual meeting, 27 West 25 Street, February 5, 2:30 P.M.

New York City Visiting Committee of State Charities Aid Association, annual meeting, Colony Club, 51 East 62 Street, 3:30 P.M.

Wednesday, February 7

New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, all-day session, Hotel Pennsylvania, February 7.

United Hospital Fund and American Association of Medical Social Workers, presentation of certificates to graduates of the Volunteer Case Aide Training Course, at the Fund, 370 Lexington Avenue, 2:30 P.M.

New York Chapter, American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, panel discussion on shock therapy, Russell Sage Foundation, 8 P.M.

Thursday, February 8

New York Academy of Medicine, fifth annual health education conference, "Health Education at the Pre-adult Level," 2 East 103 Street, 9:30 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Yorkville Civic Council, open membership meeting, Madison Presbyterian Church, 221 Madison Avenue, 4 P.M.

Schools and the Community

(Continued from page 5)

presumably so well known? Had we but incorporated the true meaning of cooperation into our thoughts and actions fewer well-intentioned "cooperative" ventures would have run on the rocks. It is our wont to attribute a lack of success to a poorly conceived undertaking, insufficient or inadequate facilities, a shortage of personnel, or even to a lack of cooperation in the other fellow!

A truly cooperative relationship between representatives of two different professional fields is all the more difficult to attain. Time and energy is too seldom expended in becoming familiar with the background of even an allied field. Competition creeps in for control of the situation, or perhaps, to demonstrate which field really has "a corner on the market," and lack of understanding of the potential contributions, as well as limitations of other participants may actually hinder progress. Impatience and discouragement over the slowness of developments may cause those who are trying to work out a common problem to abandon the attempt as hopeless, and as having been prematurely initiated.

IT MUST BE stated that occasionally this is the fact. More often than not, failure to create and maintain a desired cooperative relationship is due to fantastic expectations, destructive competition, lack of familiarity with the professional field of the other, failure to recognize and accept his practical limitations, and the struggle to maintain control and avidity to accept all the credit.

Perhaps the single and most frequent obstacle to be overcome in working out cooperative relationships is the insecurity and uncertainty which is elicited by the prospect of having to alter long existing

behavior patterns and ways of thinking, and doing which are satisfying, and which contribute to a sense of security. Each of the participants, if the cooperative relationship is to mature, must discard some comfortable mode of thought or pattern of action, and take on new and often unfamiliar feelings, conduct and action. However, each participant should gain some encouragement from the knowledge that adjustments to new patterns are being made by other participants, too, for whom the process is equally difficult.

I am convinced that school and community are working toward the same goals for children, and I am equally certain that productive cooperative school-community relationships are in the making and will continue to be formed on a wider base in the near future. The secret of success, if it may be termed a secret, is that each has a contribution which the other needs whether or not the inter-dependency is as yet completely recognized, and the means of achieving it understood.

Skill in the methodology of achieving cooperation between school and community will grow as time goes on. Even more important than skill, however, are the personalities of the participants and their ability to get along and work with others.

Qualitative analysis of the factors which comprise the ability to get along with others defies accurate and complete evaluation at present. But there is little doubt that the field of school-community-cooperative-relationship offers a distinct challenge to those with vision, and integrated personality. Skill and competence are essential also, but can in no way substitute for the priceless ingredients of a capacious personality, which includes the ability to get along with others.

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PHILIP S. PLATT
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